lead the world in science and innovation. We need a STEM workforce that is equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of today's industries and make breakthrough discoveries that will launch future industries. We are having a spirited debate in Congress about how best to position ourselves to maintain our leadership position in science and innovation, especially with respect to China. In debating how much we invest, at what agency, and in what form, we cannot lose sight of a key advantage of ours—our diversity.

Research provides compelling evidence that diversity unlocks innovation, yet we have failed to fully leverage the diverse talent available to us. Of particular concern is the underrepresentation of women and minority researchers in STEM faculty positions. According to the National Science Foundation's recently released report entitled, Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering, women hold only 25 percent of full professor positions in STEM. The numbers are even more striking for faculty in racial and ethnic minority groups. Black STEM faculty represent only 2.5 percent of full professors across all science disciplines, while only 4.6 percent of full professors are Hispanic. In some fields, the disparity is particularly stark. Women make up only 19 percent of full professors in computer science and 11 percent in engineering. The number of Black and Hispanic professors in computer science are so small, they cannot be reported without compromising their privacy. In engineering, 2.5 percent of professors are Black and 4.3 percent are Hispanic.

This lack of diversity in the academic workforce is holding us back. It is critical to ensure STEM faculty resemble the students they are teaching. When students see someone who looks like them in a career they want to pursue, they are more likely to see it as an achievable goal. Diversity of perspectives also advances research and leads to new lines of inquiry. Without diverse STEM faculty, we cannot grow the STEM workforce and advance the research and innovation we need to take on the pressing challenges ahead and to compete around the world.

The STEM Opportunities Act would empower Federal agencies and universities to identify and lower barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women, minorities, and other groups underrepresented in STEM studies and careers. The bill promotes an evidence-driven approach to these challenges. It requires agencies to collect comprehensive demographic data on the grant review process and on STEM faculty at U.S. universities. The bill supports research on participation and career trajectories and the implementation of best practices for increasing the recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty.

This bill also pushes Federal agencies to do more to ensure all researchers have a fair shot at receiving funding for their work. The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is directed to develop consistent federal policies for recipients of federal research awards who have caregiving responsibilities. The bill also requires consistent federal guidance to grant reviewers and program officers on best practices to minimize the effects of implicit bias in the review of federal research grants. It requires OSTP to develop guidance for universities and Federal laboratories to aid them in identifying any cultural and institutional barriers limiting the recruitment, retention, and achievement of underrepresented groups in academic and government STEM research careers, and in developing and implementing current best practices for reducing such barriers.

I have been working on a version of this legislation for nearly 15 years. I thank Ranking Member LUCAS for joining me last Congress, and again this Congress, in making this a bipartisan bill. I also thank the 25 organizations and institutions that have endorsed this legislation.

After the year we have just gone through, it is undeniable that science, and scientists, are critical to ensuring we are poised to handle the challenges ahead. We must act now to ensure we have the STEM workforce we will need. The STEM Opportunities Act is an important step in that direction. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both bodies to get this legislation over the finish line.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER JEFF KALP

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Jeff Kalp for his 16 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Kalp has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

WASTEFUL GOVERNMENT SPENDING

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this time today to warn my fellow lawmakers that the passage of any infrastructure legislation must hold contractors and project sponsors who receive federal dollars accountable for their performance or risk another round of failed government projects, financed or bailed out at taxpayers' expense.

Too often, ventures financed by the federal government have failed to be completed or simply never worked and, in the end, it's the taxpayers who are typically the big losers.

I will be working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure that language is included in any infrastructure legislation that ensures that previous projects utilizing major federal assistance, that have defaulted and gone bust, cannot be eligible to reapply and do the same thing again.

The now-famous Solyndra solar energy project—the first major alternative energy infrastructure project launched by the Obama Administration as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,—cost taxpayers over $500 million, but the solar panel manufacturer went bankrupt within a few years leaving taxpayers on the hook for almost all of a $535 million loan guarantee.

Later in the Obama Administration, in what can only be described as Solyndra 2.0, the Department of Energy committed $737 million to the development of the Crescent Dunes solar energy project in Nevada, also in the form of loan guarantees. That project still doesn't produce electricity and taxpayers are out as much as $234 million of the outstanding DOE loan balance if not more. This is after the project received an additional $275 million in taxpayer money under Treasury's Section 1603 program in 2017.

Only in Washington, DC does this scenario make sense. It is crucial that any energy infrastructure projects funded going forward, especially now that Congress is considering a much broader definition of infrastructure, should build in the kind of oversight and accountability measures that will minimize the potential for more boondoggles.

If we fail to do this, taxpayers will once again be left holding the bag and we will have failed to do our duty in terms of overseeing the programs we support while protecting taxpayers.

COMBATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SCIENCE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 17, 2021

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States has made great strides in recruiting more women to study science and engineering and pursue research careers. Despite this progress, women researchers remain underrepresented in many STEM fields, particularly in senior positions. For a long time, many assumed that as the number of women earning STEM degrees increased, the disparity at the top would narrow. But that has not been the case. Unfortunately, we continue to lose talented women at every stage of their research careers.

In 2018, the National Academies released a consensus report examining the consequences of sexual harassment on the careers of women in STEM. The report found that sexual harassment is pervasive in the sciences and it is banning women's careers and driving talented researchers out of the field altogether. The report committee found that policies currently in place, such as Title IX, are ineffective at protecting individual researchers. The committee called on Federal